

Ambassador Morningstar's Statement Regarding Recent Events

I have seen media reports that authorities arrested several youth activists in the days preceding the March 10 public demonstration in Baku's Fountain Square. Then, contrary to internationally recognized standards, the authorities had three of these activists give televised confessions for alleged crimes.

Following these developments, police used water cannons and rubber bullets to break up groups of peaceful participants in the protest. They then detained several protesters.

I am a friend of Azerbaijan and admire its achievements since it regained its independence in 1991. I am confident that Azerbaijan can reach its great democratic and economic potential, but only if the government respects the right of peaceful protest, promotes the rule of law, and engages in a meaningful dialogue with citizens to address legitimate public concerns.

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